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PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Group: 3611
Atty. Docket: 8266-0592
Applicants: Ruschke et al.
Invention: MOTORIZED PROPULSION
SYSTEM FOR A BED
Serial No.: 09/853,802
Filed: May 11, 2001
Examiner: Luby, Matthew D.

Certificate Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.8(a)

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on July 23, 2003

Brenda Vandever
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Dated: July 23, 2003

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
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APPEAL BRIEF
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Dear Sir:

This Appeal Brief is submitted in triplicate and furtherance of the notice of appeal filed June 9, 2003. A final rejection was issued on March 12, 2003 followed by an Advisory Action issued on May 27, 2003. A notice of appeal was filed on June 9, 2003 and received by the US Patent Office on June 11, 2003. Accordingly, this Appeal Brief is timely filed without requiring payment of extension fees. A check in the amount of \$320.00 is submitted herewith to satisfy the 37 C.F.R. §1.17(c) filing fee.

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Real Party in Interest

The subject application has been assigned to Hill-Rom Services, Inc. which is a Delaware corporation headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware.

Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no related appeals or interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

Status of Claims

Claims 8-40 are pending in the application of which claims 23-25, 27, and 28 are withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 11 and 30-33 are allowed.

Claims 16-18, 20-22, 26, and 29 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Abstract 09024071 (hereinafter "'071 Japanese Patent").

Claims 8-10, 12-15, 19, and 34-40 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious in view of the '071 Japanese Patent.

Status of Amendments

An Amendment was filed on April 30, 2003 in response to the Final Action including the substance of an telephonic interview held on April 25, 2003 between the Examiner and William S. Meyers, one of the undersigned attorneys for the Applicant. However, in the Advisory Action the Examiner indicated that the Amendment filed on April 30, 2003 was not entered. As such, there are no outstanding Amendments.

Summary of the Invention

The following is a concise explanation of the invention defined in the claims involved in this appeal. The claims involved in this appeal were elected as being directed to the propulsion system shown in Figs. 1-4 of the application. As such, the following summary concentrates on the propulsion system related to Figs. 1-4. However, the following should not be construed as the only locations of support in the application for the claims involved in this appeal. Further, the following should not be construed to limit the claims involved in this appeal or any other patentable feature of the present disclosure.

This invention relates to patient supports, such as beds. More particularly, the present invention relates to devices for moving a patient support to assist caregivers in moving the patient support from one location in a care facility to another location in the care facility.

A patient support or bed 10 in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present disclosure is shown in Fig. 1. Bed 10 includes a bedframe 12, a mattress 14 positioned on bedframe 12 to define a patient rest surface 16, a first patient restraint board or headboard 18 coupled to bedframe 12, a second patient restraint board or footboard 20 coupled to bedframe 12, and a pair of third patient restraint boards or siderails 22 coupled to bedframe 12. A preferred embodiment propulsion system 24 is provided that couples to bedframe 12 and headboard 18, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. Propulsion system 24 is provided to assist a caregiver in moving bed 10 between various rooms or locations in a care facility. According to the presently preferred embodiment, propulsion system 24 includes a propulsion device 26, a frame 28, and a coupling device or coupler 30 configured to couple frame 28 to headboard 18 and bedframe 12 so that a caregiver can couple and uncouple propulsion system 24 to bed 10.

As shown in Fig. 4, frame 28 of propulsion system 24 includes a housing 68, a frame member 70 coupled to housing 68, and a pair of brackets 71 coupled to frame member 70 and housing 68. Frame 28 further includes a handle 78 positioned in a pair of sockets 80 coupled to brackets 71 as shown in Fig. 4.

Propulsion device 24 includes a motor (not shown) positioned in housing 68, a motor controller (not shown), and a pair of drive wheels 72 coupled to frame 28 and the motor that provide the force and energy necessary to move bed 10 about the care facility. Propulsion system 24 further includes a pair of secondary wheels 74 coupled to brackets 71.

Coupling device 30 includes a first pair of hooks 82 configured to couple to attachment strut 46 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4 and a second pair of hooks 84 coupled to handle 78 that are configured to couple to headboard 18 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. First pair of hooks 82 include a flat portion 110 configured to hook over hooked portion 93 of notched bar 52. As shown in Fig. 4, second pair of hooks 84 each include a base 114 slidably coupled to handle 78 and a hook member 116 coupled to base 114 and configured to hook over an upper edge 118 of headboard 18.

When propulsion system 24 is not coupled to bed 10 and handle 78 is in a tilted position, as shown in Fig. 1, propulsion system 24 is moved about a care facility from one bed to another by rolling on drive wheels 72 and secondary wheels 74. When a caregiver desires to move bed 10 between positions in a care facility, propulsion system 24 is coupled to bed 10. To couple propulsion system 24 to bed 10, propulsion system 24 is positioned in front of the head end of bed 10 as shown in Fig. 1. While handle 78 is in the tilted position, propulsion system 24 is rolled in direction 128 toward the head end of bed 10 so that flat portions 110 of first pair of hooks 82 contact notched bar 52 as shown in Fig. 2. Next, handle 78 is pushed forward in direction 124 to a substantially vertical position, as shown in Fig. 3, and base 114 of second pair of hooks 84 is slid down handle 78 in direction 120 until hook

members 116 are positioned over upper edge 118 of headboard 18.

During rotation of handle 78, secondary wheels 74 are lifted from floor 33 as shown in Fig. 3. Second pair of hooks 84 maintain handle 78 and the remainder of propulsion system 24 in this position during use of propulsion system 24 to move bed 10 about the care facility.

To remove propulsion system 24 from bed 10, base 114 of second hooks 84 are slid upwardly in direction 122 so that hook members 116 no longer hook upper edge 118 so that handle 78 can be moved in direction 126 away from headboard 18 to the tilted position. Continued movement of handle 78 in direction 126 engages secondary wheels 74 with floor 33 to provide a pivot point to lift hooks 82. Then, propulsion system 24 is pulled in direction 130 away from bed 10 as shown in Figs. 1 and 2.

Issues

- I. Are claims 16-18, 20-22, 26, and 29 anticipated by the '071 Japanese Patent?
- II. Are claims 8-10, 12-15, 19, and 34-40 obvious in view of the '071 Japanese Patent?

Grouping of Claims

Claims 8-10, 12-22, 26, 29, and 34-40 are believed to be separately patentable. However, for the purposes of this appeal, claims 8-10 and 12-15 (Group I) are grouped together, claims 16-18 and 20 (Group II) are grouped together, claims 21, 22, 26, 29 (Group III) are grouped together, and claims 34-40 (Group IV) are grouped together.

Arguments

I. Claims 16-18, 20-22, 26, and 29 are not anticipated by the '071 Japanese Patent? Under 35 USC §102(b).

A. Introduction

The '071 Japanese Patent does not anticipate claims 16-18, 20-22, 26, and 29 under 35 USC §102(b) as suggested by the Examiner. Applicant submits that the '071 Japanese Patent does not anticipate the apparatus as claimed in Group II including independent claim 16 because the '071 Japanese Patent does not disclose, teach or suggest all the apparatus of independent claim 16 which recites “A propulsion system ... comprising a propulsion device ... and a coupler ... adapted to be coupled to the patient restraint board.” Applicant submits that the '071 Japanese Patent does not anticipate the apparatus as claimed in Group III including independent claim 21 because the '071 Japanese Patent at least does not disclose, teach or suggest the apparatus as claimed in claim 21 which recites “A propulsion system configured to move a patient support having a bedframe ... comprising a propulsion device ... a coupler configured to move between a coupled position (and an uncoupled position ... and a vertically extending handle coupled to the coupler and configured to move the coupler between the coupled and uncoupled positions.”

B. Anticipation

For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim. See Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, (“MPEP”), § 2131 (8th ed. 2001). (citing Verdegaal Bros. V. Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987) and Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989) (“The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim.”)). See also Teleflex Inc. v. Ficosa North America Corp., 299

F.3d 1313, ___, 63 USPQ2d 1374 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (“As we [the Federal Circuit] have repeatedly stated, anticipation requires that each limitation of a claim must be found in a single reference. ”). General Electric Co. v. Nintendo Co., 179 F.3d 1350, 1356, 50 USPQ2d 1910, 1915 (Fed. Cir. 1999) (“[A]nticipation requires that a single prior art reference disclose every limitation in a patent claim.”) (citing PPG Indus., Inc. v. Guardian Indus. Corp., 75 F.3d 1558, 1566, 37 USPQ2d 1618, 1624 (Fed. Cir. 1996)).

C. The ‘071 Japanese Patent does not anticipate Group II including independent claim 16.

Applicants submit the rejection of independent claim 16 as anticipated by the ‘071 Japanese Patent should be reversed because the ‘071 Japanese Patent at least does not disclose, teach or suggest the apparatus as claimed in independent claim 16 which recites “A propulsion system ... comprising a propulsion device ... and a coupler ... adapted to be coupled to the patient restraint board.” As discussed with the Examiner in the April 25th interview and previously stated in the Applicants’ Amendment and Reply filed on December 8, 2002, the text of the ‘071 Japanese Patent states that couplers 14 and 15 of the ‘071 Japanese Patent are coupled to frame 3 of bed 2, not a patient restraint board. In particular, the ‘071 Japanese Patent discloses,

“When bed transporting device (1) is used to transport bed (2), bed transporting device (1) is connected to frame (3) of bed (2). ... Upper connector (14) set on the upper portion has recess (14a) fit to frame (3) of bed (2). Lower connector (15) set on the lower portion has recess (15a) for pressing frame (3) of bed (2) upward.”¹

As such, the text of ‘071 Japanese Patent does not disclose, teach or suggest a propulsion system as defined by claim 16.

The Figures of the ‘071 Japanese Patent further support that couplers 14 and

¹ See Enclosed Certified Translation of Selected Portions of the ‘071 Japanese Patent.

15 are coupled to frame 3, not a patient restraint board. Exemplary patient restraint boards, as stated in the present application, include headboards, footboards, and siderails.² Although portions of a headboard, footboard, or siderail may include openings, each further includes structure to restrain the movement of a patient resting in the bed. Referring to Fig. 1 of the '071 Japanese Patent, the bed transport device of the '071 Japanese Patent is completely visible through the portion of frame 3 that the Examiner appears to be characterizing as a patient restraint board.

Further, the bed transport device is shorter than an upper portion of frame 3, indicating that coupler 14 (which is positioned lower than the top of the bed transport device) may not couple the upper portion of frame 3, but must couple one of the two lower portions of frame 3. As such, the '071 Japanese Patent does not disclose a bed transport device adapted to be coupled to a patient restraint board. Therefore, the '071 Japanese Patent does not disclose, teach or suggest a propulsion system as defined by claim 16.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that independent claim 16 patentably defines the invention over the '071 Japanese Patent. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejection of independent claim 16 should be reversed and that independent claim 16 should be allowed.

Claims 17-20 depend from independent claim 16. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 17-20 should also be allowed at least for the reasons given above and the further limitations of claims of each of the respective dependent claims.

² "Bed 10 includes a bedframe 12, a mattress 14 positioned on bedframe 12 to define a patient rest surface 16, a first patient restraint board or headboard 18 coupled to bedframe 12, a second patient restraint board or footboard 20 coupled to bedframe 12, and a pair of third patient restraint boards or siderails 22 coupled to bedframe 12. " Specification, page 4, lines 4-8.

D. The '071 Japanese Patent does not anticipate Group III including independent claim 21.

Applicants submit that the '071 Japanese Patent at least does not disclose, teach or suggest the apparatus as claimed in claim 21 which recites “A propulsion system configured to move a patient support having a bedframe ... comprising a propulsion device ... a coupler configured to move between a coupled position ... and an uncoupled position ... and a vertically extending handle coupled to the coupler and configured to move the coupler between the coupled and uncoupled positions.” The Examiner stated in the Final Rejection that handle 11 of the '071 Japanese Patent is a vertically extending handle “inasmuch as it is extended at a vertical height above the floor.”³ Apparently, the Examiner believes the claim is directed to the relative position of the handle above the floor.

However, Applicants are not claiming the relative position of the handle above the floor. Independent claim 21 recites “a vertically extending handle” In claim 21, the term “vertically” is an adverb that modifies the adjective “extending” to further define the manner in which the “handle” is “extending” not the relative position of the handle above the floor. As stated above, handle 11 of the '071 Japanese Patent appears to be horizontally extending and not vertically extending. As such, the apparatus of the '071 Japanese Patent at least does not disclose, teach, or suggest “a vertically extending handle coupled to the coupler and configured to move the coupler between the coupled and uncoupled positions,” as required by the propulsion system of claim 21. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that the rejection of independent claim 21 should be reversed and that independent claim 21 should be allowed.

³Final Action, page 3.

Claims 22, 26, and 29 depend from independent claim 21. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 22, 26, and 29 should be allowed at least for the reasons given above and the further limitations of claims of each of the respective dependent claims.

Further, claims 23-25, 27, and 28 depend from independent claim 21 and are directed to a non-elected species. The Examiner indicated in the Office Action dated July 2, 2002 that independent claim 21 appears to be a generic claim. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 23-25, 27, and 28 depend from an allowable generic claim and are in condition for allowance.

II. Claims 8-10, 12-15, 19, and 34-40 are not obvious in view of the '071 Japanese Patent Under 35 USC §103(a).

A. Introduction.

The '071 Japanese Patent does not render claims 8-10, 12-15, 19, and 34-40 (Groups I and IV) obvious under 35 USC §103(a) as suggested by the Examiner. The Examiner's rejections of these claims are based on incorrect and improper legal standards. Thus, the Examiner's rejections should be withdrawn. Applicants submit that the Examiner failed to give patentable weight to the limitation "at least one of the first member and the second member being adjustable" of independent claim 8 (Group I) and the limitation "the separation between the first member and the second member being adjustable" of independent claim 34 (Group IV). Based on a proper consideration of the above limitations, the Applicants submit that the claims of Group I and Group IV are not obvious in view of the '071 Japanese Patent and should be allowed.

B. The Examiner improperly failed to give patentable weight to the respective "adjustable" feature of Group I and Group IV.

Independent claim 8 includes the limitation of "at least one of the first member

and the second member being adjustable.” As explained below, Applicants submit that the Examiner improperly rejected independent claim 8 at least because the above limitation of claim 8 is not obvious in view of the ‘071 Japanese Patent. Independent claim 34 includes the limitation of “the separation between the first member and the second member being adjustable.” As explained below, Applicants submit that the Examiner improperly rejected independent claim 34 at least because the above limitation of claim 34 is not obvious in view of the ‘071 Japanese Patent.

In rejecting both independent claim 8 and independent claim 34, the Examiner relied on the case of In re Stevens, 101 USPQ 284 (CCPA 1954). In rejecting claim 8, the Examiner cited to In re Stevens and stated, “It would have been obvious ... to make at least one of the first and second member adjustable, since it has been held that the provision of adjustability, where needed, involves only routine skill in the art and in order to provide for adjustability to patient supports of varying heights.”⁴ In rejecting claim 34, the Examiner cited to In re Stevens and stated, “It would have been obvious ... to make the separation between the first and second member adjustable, since it has been held that the provision of adjustability, where needed, involves only routine skill in the art and in order to provide for adjustability to patient supports of varying heights.”⁵ Applicants submit that the Examiner is improperly applying In re Stevens to both of independent claim 8 and independent claim 34.

The claims at issue in the In re Stevens case were directed to a handle for a fishing rod. The handle of the fishing rod was connected to the body portion with a universal joint such that the handle was universally adjustable. The handle further included a longitudinally adjustable finger hook. The Stevens Examiner rejected the claims over a combination of the references, Teetor in view of either Bagley or Falge et al. and in view of

⁴ Final Rejection, page 3.

⁵ Final Rejection, page 4.

either Yuncker or Crosby. Teetor related to a fishing rod handle and gave as a principle object a pivotably attached hand grip.⁶ The Bagley and Falge et al. references relate to a hanger for electrical fixtures and a rear view mirror holder, respectively, and both disclose a universal coupling between two members. Both the Yuncker and Crosby references were related to fishing equipment and both disclosed an adjustable finger grip. As such, in In re Stevens the applied art included both types of adjustability included in the claims at issue.

The Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences examined the breath of the In re Stevens case in 1997 in the unpublished and non binding precedential opinion Ex Parte Beasley 1997 WL 1948977 (Bd. Pat. App. and Interf. 1997).⁷ In Ex Parte Beasley, the Examiner rejected claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 over a single reference similar to the present Examiner's rejection. The rejected claims were directed to a turntable and including "means for elevationally adjusting the support wheels (claims 4 and 19), means for elevationally adjusting the wheel track (claims 12 and 24), and means on the center bearing for elevationally adjusting the orientation of the assembled panel units (claim 14)."⁸ The Beasley Examiner, relying on In re Stevens, stated "these means are just obvious design choices, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to make structural members adjustable as a matter of obvious engineering design choice."⁹

The Board distinguished In re Stevens on the basis that the adjustable means of the Beasley application solve a stated problem unlike the types of adjustability in In re Stevens wherein the prior art taught the basic concept of adjustability in the same art and the specific joints being claimed. The Board in reviewing the Beasley rejection and the Beasley

⁶ "providing a handle having a grip which may be located in a position that constitutes substantially an elongation of the rod or may be passed to a position that is downwardly included with respect to the rod after the manner of a pistol grip." In re Stevens 101 USPQ at 284-85.

⁷ Ex Parte Beasley is also available from the USPTO web site at the following location: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/office/dcom/bpai/bpai.htm>.

⁸ Ex Parte Beasley, 1997 WL at *4.

⁹ Ex Parte Beasley, 1997 WL at *4.

application noted that the claimed adjustment means “are for the express purpose of fine tuning the turntable relative to its supporting structure.”¹⁰ The Board went on to contrast the Beasley claims and In re Stevens by stating:

“Thus, they [, the claimed adjustment means,] are not merely a matter of obvious design choice solving no stated problem. ... The Stevens case cited ... in support [of] the examiner’s position is noted. In Stevens, the examiner cited references which taught both the basic concept of adjustability in the same art area as the claimed device, and the specific joints being claimed. Thus, in Stevens, the examiner provided sufficient evidence from which to conclude that the claimed subject matter would have been obvious. Such is clearly not the case here.”¹¹

Ex Parte Beasley suggests that for an adjustable feature in a claim to be unpatentable, the applied art must show the basic concept of adjustability in the same art area. Furthermore, Beasley suggests the fact that a claimed adjustable feature solves a stated problem suggests that the claimed adjustable feature is not a matter of obvious design choice.

Applicants submit that the ‘071 Japanese Patent at least does not disclose, teach, or suggest at least the “at least one of the first member and the second member being adjustable” limitation of claim 8 or the “the separation between the first member and the second member being adjustable” limitation of claim 34. The Examiner has failed to point out where in the ‘071 Japanese Patent the concept of adjustability is disclosed. Further, these respective limitations of claims 8 and 34 solve the stated problem of allowing the propulsion system of claim 8 and the propulsion system of claim 34, respectively, to accommodate beds of various heights.¹²

As discussed with the Examiner during the April 25th interview, the ‘071 Japanese Patent does not disclose, teach, or suggest the concept of adjustability to accommodate beds of differing dimensions. As such, the Applicants submit that the rejection

¹⁰ Ex Parte Beasley, 1997 WL at *4.

¹¹ Ex Parte Beasley, 1997 WL at *4.

¹² Specification p.6, line 12 to p.7, line 19.

of claims 8 and 34 should be reversed and that claims 8 and 34 are allowable.

Claims 9, 10, and 12-15 depend from independent claim 8. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 9, 10, and 12-15 should be allowed at least for the reasons given above and the further limitations of claims of each of the respective dependent claims.


Claims 35-40 depend from independent claim 34. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 35-40 should be allowed at least for the reasons given above and the further limitations of claims of each of the respective dependent claims.

Conclusion

In view of the above, the Applicant respectfully request that the Examiner's rejections be reversed. Thus, it is respectfully requested that claims 8-10, 12-30, and 34-40 be allowed in addition to allowed claims 11 and 30-33.

Respectfully submitted

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APPENDIX

8. (Previously Amended) A propulsion system configured to move a patient support, the propulsion system comprising

a propulsion device adapted to contact the floor to power movement of the patient support and

a coupler configured to detachably couple the propulsion device to the patient support, the coupler including a first member adapted to couple the patient support at a first distance from the floor and a second member adapted to couple the patient support at a second distance from the floor that is greater than the first distance, at least one of the first member and the second member being adjustable.

9. (Previously Amended) The propulsion system of claim 8, wherein the second member is adapted to couple to a patient restraint board of the patient support and the first member is adapted to couple to a base frame of the patient support.

10. (Previously Amended) The propulsion system of claim 8, further comprising a vertically extending handle, wherein the propulsion device includes a frame and a motorized wheel coupled to the frame, and the vertically extending handle is coupled to the frame, and the second member is coupled to the vertically extending handle.

11. (Allowed) A propulsion system configured to move a patient support, the propulsion system comprising

a propulsion device adapted to contact the floor to power movement of the

patient support

a coupler configured to detachably couple the propulsion device to the patient support, the coupler including a first member adapted to couple the patient support at a first distance from the floor and a second member adapted to couple the patient support at a second distance from the floor that is greater than the first distance, and

a vertically extending handle, wherein the propulsion device includes a frame and a motorized wheel coupled to the frame, and the vertically extending handle is coupled to the frame, and wherein the second member is slidably coupled to the vertically extending handle.

12. (Previously Amended) The propulsion system of claim 8, wherein the first member is hook-shaped and adapted to hook onto a bedframe of the patient support.

13. (Previously Amended) The propulsion system of claim 12, wherein the second member is hook-shaped and adapted to hook onto a patient restraint board of the patient support.

14. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 8, further comprising a frame and a plurality of wheels coupled to the frame, wherein the propulsion device is coupled to the frame and the plurality of wheels are adapted to permit rolling of the propulsion system from one patient support to another.

15. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 14, further comprising a handle coupled to the frame to permit pushing of the propulsion system by a user.

16. (Original) A propulsion system configured to move a patient support having a patient

restraint board, the propulsion system comprising

a propulsion device configured to contact the floor to power movement of the patient support and

a coupler configured to couple the propulsion device to the patient support, the coupler being adapted to be coupled to the patient restraint board.

17. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 16, wherein the coupler is adapted to couple to a base frame of the patient support.

18. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 16, wherein the propulsion device includes a frame, a motorized wheel coupled to the frame, and a vertically extending handle, and the coupler includes a first member adapted to be coupled to the patient restraint board and the vertically extending handle.

19. (Previously Amended) The propulsion system of claim 18, wherein the vertically extending handle extends from the frame of the propulsion device to a height above the patient restraint board.

20. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 16, wherein the coupler is adapted to couple to a top edge of the patient restraint board.

21. (Previously Amended) A propulsion system configured to move a patient support having a bedframe and mattress supported by the bedframe, the propulsion system comprising
a propulsion device adapted to contact the floor to power movement of the patient support,

a coupler configured to move between a coupled position coupling the propulsion device to the bedframe and an uncoupled position permitting movement of the propulsion device away from the bedframe, and

a vertically extending handle coupled to the coupler and configured to move the coupler between the coupled and uncoupled positions.

22. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 21, wherein the handle includes a handle portion positioned at a sufficient height above the floor to facilitate grasping of the handle portion by user to move the propulsion system about a care facility.

23. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 21, wherein the propulsion device includes a frame and a drive wheel coupled to the frame and the handle is pivotably coupled to the frame.

24. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 21, further comprising a linkage system configured to couple the handle to the coupler.

25. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 24, wherein the linkage system includes a first link pivotably coupled to the handle and a second link coupled to the coupler and pivotably coupled to the first link.

26. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 21, wherein the coupler is hook shaped.

27. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 21, wherein the coupler is ball shaped to fit within a socket of the patient support.

28. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 21, further comprising a latch configured to hold the handle in at least one of the coupling and uncoupling positions.

29. (Original) The propulsion system of claim 21, further comprising a plurality of wheels configured to permit a user pushing on the handle to roll the propulsion system from one patient support to another.

30. (Allowed) The propulsion system of claim 11, wherein the second member is adapted to couple to a patient restraint board of the patient support and the first member is adapted to couple to a base frame of the patient support.

31. (Allowed) The propulsion system of claim 11, wherein the first member is hook-shaped and adapted to hook onto a bedframe of the patient support.

32. (Allowed) The propulsion system of claim 31, wherein the second member is hook-shaped and adapted to hook onto a patient restraint board of the patient support.

33. (Allowed) The propulsion system of claim 11, wherein the vertically extending handle extends from the frame of the propulsion device to a height above the patient restraint board.

34. (Previously Added) A propulsion system configured to move a patient support, the propulsion system comprising

a propulsion device adapted to contact the floor to power movement of the patient support and

a coupler configured to move between a coupled position coupling the propulsion device to the patient support and an uncoupled position permitting movement of the propulsion device away from the patient support, the coupler including a first member adapted to be coupled to the patient support and a second member adapted to be coupled to the patient support and spaced apart from the first member, the separation between the first member and the second member being adjustable.

35. (Previously Added) The propulsion system of claim 34, wherein the first member and the second member are separated by a first distance corresponding to the coupled position of the coupler and by a second distance corresponding to the uncoupled position of the coupler.

36. (Previously Added) The propulsion system of claim 35, wherein the second distance is greater than the first distance.

37. (Previously Added) The propulsion system of claim 36, wherein the propulsion device comprises a frame and a handle extending from the frame and wherein at least one of the first member and the second member is moveably coupled to the handle of the propulsion device.

38. (Previously Added) The propulsion system of claim 37, wherein the at least one of the first member and the second member coupled to the handle is adapted to be coupled to a patient restraint board of the patient support.

39. (Previously Added) The propulsion system of claim 38, wherein at least one of the first member and the second member is coupled to the frame of the propulsion device and is adapted to be coupled to a bedframe of the patient support.

40. (Previously Added) The propulsion system of claim 34, wherein at least one of the first member and the second member is adapted to be coupled to a patient restraint board of the patient support.